k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI1
Bedouins MJ4

Exclamations

Chap. IX

PRETTY CUSTOMS AND EXPRESSIONS AMONG WOMEN

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(*a*) *Expressions of astonishment* (at seeing or hearing something startling).

Ya kabli kabda—Oh! my liver. (Especially 'Ajman women.)
Ya galbi galba—My heart of hearts. ('Ajman women.)
Yammak!—Oh Mother!
Yibak!—Oh Father!

Men have one very common expression, "'Allāh" pronounced with a long drawl on the final "a". This when they have seen or heard something really surprising or wonderful.

(*b*) *Expressions of affection.*

Ba'ad aini aini—Oh my eyes, my eyes.
Ba'ad galbi galbi—My heart, my heart.
Ba'ad ruhi ruhi—My soul, my soul.

(*c*) *Woman's expression of impatience.*

Ya wailī wailo—E.g. "Come here Nura, the English lady wants to speak to you, why don't you hurry you foolish one, *ya wailī wailo*, what is the matter with you!"

(*d*) When the head of the house, or a son, returns from a long journey or from the pearl-banks, the woman of the house hangs up on a pole, with a cross-piece to it, one of her best and most brilliantly coloured *thaubs*. Among townswomen, this is hung up on the roof of the house, for the world to see. In the case of Badawin women in the desert the pole is placed in front of the tent. This custom is almost similar to that observed when an important shaikh or personage is expected to arrive at or pass a camp, and the Badawin ladies desire to show him welcome.

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The custom is known as *raiyat*.

(*e*) Another pretty custom is to show to a guest at a tent, or big man passing by and staying for coffee, a baby that is just born, when for luck he gives into its little hand a rupee or riyal.

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SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

The statement often made that a bride never shows her face to her Arab husband is not exactly correct. As often as not the husband forcibly

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drought-resisting trees and shrubs, which will at any rate keep them alive. 233
Under such circumstances the milk supply gets very short and the Arabs 262
suffer much from hunger, for milk is their staple food. Among the Badu in South-Western Arabia dates are a rare luxury, meat is seldom eaten except by guests for whom an animal has been slaughtered, and all grain has to be purchased in the villages.

You can see that it is a hard life with absolutely no margin. Hunger 132
and thirst, heat and cold—bitter cold. Few people realize how cold it can be in these Arabian deserts. In summer the temperature rises to 120° in the shade, and there really is no shade, and the only water which these Badu have to drink is brackish and tastes like a strong dose of Epsom salts. In winter it is nearly freezing, and at night a herdsboy will scrape [513]
a shallow trench in the sand, lie down naked in it and then cover himself 721
with his shirt. It certainly is a desperately hard life, and it is made even harder by continuous raiding and counter-raiding. Everyone is living the whole time in a state of suspense with his rifle in his hand and his eyes scanning the horizon. A herdsman sees some mounted Arabs in the distance and immediately collects his camels, which are never very numerous, and drives them off as fast as he can, for no one can afford to take any chances. If the people he has seen are friends they will signal [201]
by throwing up sand into the air or send one person forward alone waving [203]
his headcloth. Then, having established contact, they will ride over, ask the news—for Badu are always anxious to have the latest news—and let their mounts graze while they refresh themselves with the milk which the herdsman provides. Generally, to keep their herds alive at all on the scanty grazing, the Badu must scatter widely, and can put up no resistance against a raiding party which may be as many as two hundred strong. All they can do is to try to drive off their camels at the first hint of danger and, if they are robbed but themselves escape, collect their friends and set off in pursuit. The raiders consequently work fast, gather what spoil they [428]
can, and disappear. Sometimes, especially if the raid has failed and if they are pursued, they have a desperate time getting back, and, should there be a blood feud between the two tribes, they can expect no mercy if they are overtaken. I heard of one party of raiders who had raided four hundred miles, had failed to get any loot, and who, to keep themselves alive on their way back, had cut off and eaten the tails and ears of their camels. Sometimes a pursuit party from the steppes follows the raiders far into sands which are unknown to them. Should a strong wind get up and blow out the tracks, they may be lost, unable to follow the raiders to the wells which lie ahead, and unable to retrace their own tracks home. Yet ordinarily the Badu are not afraid of thirst. More than once [271
they have told me that in winter it would be hunger, not thirst, which 261]
would kill them if they were left without food or water. This is an instance of Badu exaggeration, but I have met Arabs who have lasted as long as seven days without either food or water.

Many of them are wonderful trackers, for their very lives depend upon 151
the accuracy with which they can read such signs. I remember once when 721
I was riding across the desert with some of them how we came upon some half-obliterated marks in the sand. One of our party turned aside and